

Appendix B: Open Letter

Dear Members of North Northants Council

August 2023

Kettering Energy Park

Since the publication of the Kettering Energy Park Draft Masterplan the strength of feeling against the proposals cannot be ignored. The proposals are NOT for an energy park; they are for a significant warehouse development. We are writing this open letter as members of local councils and representatives of our constituents and their communities to express our strong objection to the proposed development. As residents and stakeholders, we are deeply concerned about the potential adverse impacts of such a large-scale project on our local environment, community, and quality of life.

It would appear that the Kettering Energy Park Masterplan is being put forward as part of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (NNJCS) despite the evident lack of public support* and despite its failure to meet Policy 26 of the NNJCS. We urge the Council to consider our critical concerns below before lending its support to this development.

Public consultation is a fundamental aspect and legal requirement of responsible governance, and it appears that neither the developers nor North Northants Council have *adequately* engaged with the community in the decision-making process. At the point of initial consultation with town and parish councils, there was insufficient detail to form a considered position on the proposals. No written material was made available for adequate review and for us to consult with our constituents at that time.

As further detail has emerged, serious concerns have arisen about the potential increase in traffic levels, and about air pollution from large-scale warehousing in a rural environment. As councillors, we have not had sight of a comprehensive traffic management plan, or details of an allocated budget and timeline. We are concerned that the road network is inadequate and that this raises doubts about the project's feasibility and adherence to Policy 26.

Policy 26 of the NNJCS explicitly emphasises that any proposed developments be sustainable, environmentally friendly, and meet the needs of the local communities and wider Nene Valley. The Energy Park fails to align with these core principles, as it poses significant risks to our natural resources, food security, wildlife habitats and bio-security and the delicate ecological balance of the region, including the Upper Nene Gravel Pits Special Protection Area.

The impact of such a development on the rural landscape and the amenity value of the surrounding neighbourhoods cannot be ignored. The proposed industrial-scale structures and facilities would irreversibly alter the character of our open local countryside, leading to the loss of valued green spaces. There would be a negative visual impact on the broader landscapes of Rockingham Forest and the Nene Valley, as well as totally changing the rural character that makes Burton Wold unique.

The proposed development is not in the best interest of residents in North Northamptonshire. NNC needs to reconsider the Masterplan and instead focus on alternative renewable energy solutions that meet the needs of the local people. It is imperative that the Council upholds Policy 26 and prioritises the long-term well-being of its constituents over proposals which would appear to be more about additional warehousing than green energy.

Let us work together to find sustainable solutions that protect our environment and enhance the quality of life for current and future generations in our communities. Please confirm that this letter will be submitted for review by the panel members at the EAP meeting on 13 September 2023.

Yours faithfully

The undersigned town and parish councils

Finedon Town Council

Burton Latimer Town Council

Cranford Parish Council

Grafton Underwood Parish Council

Great Addington Parish Council

Little Addington Parish Council

Ringstead Parish Council

Woodford Parish Council

Pytchley Parish Council

Earls Barton Parish Council

Lowick and Slipton Parish Council

Barton Seagrave Parish Council

Thrapston Town Council

*Evidence of opposition to the Draft Masterplan includes:

- A petition signed by 1700 people
- Emails sent to Finedon Town Council in response to public consultation via the parish magazine
- Names and addresses of residents of Burton Latimer who oppose the plan gathered through face-to-face consultation by the Town Council
- Neighbourhood Plan survey results from Great Addington Parish Council
 - A list of residents opposing the plan from a door-to-door survey conducted by Little Addington Parish Council